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ABSTRACT

During adolescence, peers emerge as the most significant social network, supplanting former strong ties to parents, teachers, and other adults. As adolescents seek to define their identities, they increasingly turn to and spend time with their peers. Peer-based prevention programs are designed to capitalize on these peer relationships by building on them and utilizing peer influence for positive ends. Of particular importance to educators, peer educators can also reinforce learning through continued contact with student peers and are very often better able to access hard-to-reach groups of students. The purpose of the Wisconsin Peer Program Evaluation Study was to identify the extent to which peer-led programs (1) can prevent or reduce important health-related problems based on previous research, (2) identify key characteristics of such effective peer programs, (3) describe and identify the extent to which these characteristics are present in Wisconsin school-based peer programs, and (4) describe the benefits of such peer programs in Wisconsin Schools. (GCP)

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ED 478 691

FIELD STUDY REPORT

Youth to Youth

An Evaluation of State AODA Funded Peer Programs in Wisconsin

2001-02

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An Evaluation of State AODA Funded Peer Programs in Wisconsin

Field Study Report

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November 2002
by
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
with an independent study by
The Center on Education and Work
University of Wisconsin - Madison

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Madison, Wisconsin

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Dr. James Frasier of the Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, under contract through the DPI, collected and analyzed program data and wrote the final field study report and executive summary.

Special thanks to many Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) and Peer Program Coordinators in the school districts who responded to the survey and the State Superintendent's AODA Advisory Council for their support and assistance in capturing students' voices, which helped in understanding the benefits of peer programs.

Table of Contents

Background 1

Purpose 1

Literature Review 2

Study Design 3

Study Findings 5

- Summary 5
- Results and Conclusions 7
- Perceived Program Benefits 25

Recommendations 33

Background

During adolescence, peers emerge as the most significant social network, supplanting former strong ties to parents, teachers, and other adults. As adolescents seek to define their identities, they increasingly turn to and spend time with their peers. Peer-based prevention programs are designed to capitalize on these peer relationships by building on them and utilizing peer influence for positive ends.

Peer-based interventions have a number of advantages. For example, peer programs typically use existing networks of information exchange and dialogue among adolescents. Given their similarity with the target population, peers typically regard these networks as credible sources of information. Peer-based interventions can also facilitate the emergence of peer leaders who can act as positive role models, thereby establishing the foundation for desired social norms within and outside of the school environment. Of particular importance to educators, peer educators can also reinforce learning through continued contact with student peers and are very often better able to access hard-to-reach groups of students. A common characteristic of peer-based interventions is that the participants often empowered themselves through the experience of educating others.

In Wisconsin, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) funds are used by school districts to implement the following types of peer involvement programs:

Peer Education: One of the two most common types of programs is peer education. Peer education is defined as the structured programs that emphasize experiential learning among participants, address some aspect of behavior change, and are led by trained peer educators. Peer education interventions use trained adolescent peer educators to facilitate encounters that promote health-related knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors among other adolescents.

Peer Leadership: Many peer-based interventions, including peer education, can include aspects of peer leadership. With this approach, some adolescents take on responsibilities and roles that may include serving as advisors, role models, educators, or mentors for their peers.

Peer Mediation: Another common type of program is peer mediation. Peer mediation programs are based on principles of negotiation, arbitration, and mediation and involve peer mediators who are trained in problem solving, conflict resolution, and communication and listening skills. The peer mediators intervene between individual disputants and attempt to facilitate solutions that are acceptable to both parties. "Peer mediation" is sometimes used in conjunction with the term "conflict resolution."

Peer Support: Peer support, which may take place one-on-one or in groups, centers around coping, exploring emotions and feelings, problem-solving, promoting positive outcomes, and building self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Peer Mentoring: Peer mentoring refers to an encouraging and supportive relationship between two people that is often cross-age (the mentor is usually older than the mentored person) and fixed-role (meaning that one individual is always the mentor and the other individual is always the mentored one).

Peer Tutoring: Peer tutoring focuses on the mastery of particular academic subjects. Traditionally, it involves one-on-one relationships between tutor and tutee. New models of peer tutoring place emphasis on benefits that result from the experience of being a tutor; such as greater confidence in one's abilities or better understanding of the subject area.

Purpose

The purpose of the Wisconsin Peer Program Evaluation Study was to identify the extent to which peer-led programs 1) can prevent or reduce important health-related problems based on previous research, 2) identify key characteristics of such effective peer programs, 3) describe and identify the extent to which these characteristics are present in Wisconsin school-based peer programs that are supported, in part, by AODA

funds administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and 4) describe the benefits of such peer programs in Wisconsin Schools.

Literature Review

The review of published peer program evaluations was conducted by DPI with assistance from the Center for Applied Behavioral Evaluation and Research at the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, DC. The review revealed some evidence that peer-led education can be an effective strategy for reducing certain risky health-related behaviors among adolescents. **In particular, the review identified that peer-led interventions can be effective in reducing alcohol, drug, or tobacco use among youth.** While there is less empirical evidence of the benefits of the peer approach for preventing HIV/STDs, pregnancy, and violent behaviors, existing data provide some degree of support for the usefulness of peer educators in increasing positive health-related outcomes. **Peer programs have also been shown to have a positive impact on the peer educators themselves, increasing their knowledge and self-efficacy, as well as influencing health risk behaviors. From the evidence gathered so far, it can be concluded that, while they may not be *the* solution to preventing young people's risk-taking behaviors, peer involvement programs can serve a valuable role.**

Unfortunately, there is insufficient evidence regarding exactly how peer educators can be most effective in producing positive outcomes among young people. In addition, because the populations, interventions, roles of peers, and peer training varied substantially among the studies reviewed, definite recommendations cannot be made as to whether future programs should be implemented solely by peers or by both adults and peers, or what pieces of the program would be more appropriately delivered by peers or adults.

Empirical evidence gathered so far about successful peer programs indicate that high quality peer programs should:

- Be based on a solid foundation in social learning and social influence theories that address how learning and behavior change occur on the individual level and within social networks;
- Use interactive, developmentally appropriate teaching methods that emphasize experiential learning rather than the presentation of information only in a didactic manner;
- Utilize class sizes that are conducive to small-group instruction;
- Use booster sessions to update and reinforce original program content;
- Be provided to more than one class;
- Be well organized and be conducted in an organized manner;
- Be implemented by peers who present the curriculum in an interesting, dynamic manner; and
- Be delivered by a skilled adult or peer leader competent in group process.

When designing and implementing peer involvement programs, the review of literature revealed that guidelines suggested by program planners, theorists, and organizations experienced with peer-based interventions should:

- Clearly define the target population, in terms of age, ethnicity/race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and life experiences, and select peer educators and peer leaders accordingly;
- Articulate program philosophies, goals, and objectives, and use these priorities to guide program design;
- Determine the roles and responsibilities of peer educators;
- Provide orientation, training, and support for peer leaders;

- Ensure program goals are consistent with the setting or location of the program;
- Provide the necessary resources;
- Ensure that the person who coordinates the program understands the value of peer programs and is committed to working with youth;
- Prepare for peer educator and staff turnover; and
- Plan for evaluation within the timeline and budget.

Study Design

DPI staff, with assistance from the Center for Applied Behavioral Evaluation and Research at the Academy for Educational Development, designed and developed the Peer Program Survey. This included adopting the characteristics from the literature review into 22 survey items organized by program design, implementation, and resources.

Peer Program Survey

The Peer Program Survey was mailed by DPI to all Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) program coordinators of school districts receiving DPI-administered AODA funds in the 2001-02 school year, either in the form of AODA Program Grants or Student AODA Mini-grants. Results and conclusions in this report are based on the analysis of responses received from the 230 of 245 (94%) school district peer program advisors that received state AODA funds. Other peer programs exist in Wisconsin that are supported by other local, state, and federal funds.

Peer Program Advisor Telephone Interview Questionnaire

DPI staff also developed the Peer Program Advisor Telephone Interview Questionnaire to secure material for the narrative descriptions of peer programs that appear throughout the report on even numbered pages, starting on page 4. DPI staff selected narratives of typical peer programs such as peer education, mediation, tutoring, leadership. During the selection process, DPI staff intentionally sought to ensure a broad selection of peer programs based on geographic distribution, level of school, school enrollment, and school district size.

Student Voices Questionnaire

In an effort to secure the opinions of youth involved in peer programs, DPI also developed a Student Voices Questionnaire. To secure student responses, peer group advisors held informal meetings with students and administered the questionnaire in either written form or oral form as determined by student age group. Student interviews were recorded anonymously and selected student responses to support the Peer Program Survey results and conclusions are provided throughout this report and are identified as "Youth Voices." DPI contracted with the Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin – Madison to collect and analyze all data and to write these reports.

Students with Alternatives

Little Chute High School
Little Chute School District
CESA #6

Advisor: Debi Schnell

Type of Peer Program: Peer Leadership

The Students with Alternatives (SWA) Program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by providing a variety of drug-free after school activities so that high school kids can be kids without using alcohol or other drugs. In the fall of each school year, all high school students are informed of the Program's first meeting. At this first meeting, between 50 to 100 sophomore, junior, and senior students sign a contract affirming their commitment to not use alcohol and/or other drugs. If a student uses alcohol or other drugs during the school year, they are automatically dismissed from SWA for one year. Freshmen that want to become members of SWA are interviewed by a group of three or four older members. During the interview, the older members explain their commitment to SWA and what it will mean to the freshman if he/she joins. SWA activities are varied and student-determined. Favorite activities during the nine years that SWA has been in operation at Little Chute High School have included camping trips, fun trips on the weekend to Wisconsin Dells, paint balling, bowling tournament, biking, attending a Brewer's baseball game, treasure hunts, Six Flags, and fishing. Two major community events take place each year: the 5th Grade Olympic Night at which the 5th graders partake in an array of competitive games, and the Senior Breakfast when the students serve about 100 senior citizens at the high school.

An Executive Board of ten high school SWA members meets every two weeks to plan a month or two of activities, dates, and costs. A very important activity of the Executive Board is to make sure that other students know about SWA and that a student can join at any time during the school year. SWA parents chaperone activities.

SWA members have not found peer pressure to be a problem and most students respect SWA members' decision not to use alcohol or other drugs. A scholarship is presented each year at the annual school awards assembly to the SWA member who has consistently contributed to the betterment of SWA and the school community. Over the years, SWA members have earned higher than average grade point averages. They have shown their pride in SWA membership by listing SWA membership on their personal resumes and college applications.

Study Findings

Summary

Major survey findings were that Wisconsin's peer-led programs:

- Exist widely in all parts of Wisconsin, in all grade levels, and in all district and school sizes.
- Peer programs in Wisconsin schools address a variety of important health issues. Almost half (45%) of all programs address AODA **and** tobacco. Almost two-thirds (62%) of peer programs address AODA **or** tobacco health issues. This is consistent with the purpose of state funding that peer programs must target alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse related issues.
- Exist in a variety of forms, most commonly peer education, peer leadership, and peer mediation.
- Were initiated for a wide variety of reasons, especially to address specific AODA problems or issues.
- Possess a very strong majority of the key characteristics of design, implementation, and resources associated with effective programs. Ninety-one percent (91%) of all peer programs in Wisconsin schools possess at least 18 or more of the 22 key characteristics of effective programs.

The survey also found that Wisconsin's peer-led programs have multiple perceived benefits and many positive results. These include:

- **Reduced health risks to students**. A very strong majority of peer programs (80%) identified the reduction of at least one health risk to students that was a result directly attributable to their peer program. Thirty-eight percent reported less alcohol and other drug use, 13 percent reported less tobacco use.
- **Safer school environments**. A very strong majority (78%) of respondents identified at least one indicator of a safer school environment that was a result directly attributable to their peer program.
- **Enhanced learning climate**. A very strong majority (76%) of respondents identified at least one indicator of an enhanced learning climate that was a result directly attributable to their peer program. Somewhat less than half of the programs (42%) identified two or more enhanced learning climate indicators that were directly attributed to their peer program.
- **Increased opportunities for student involvement**. Almost all respondents (97%) reported at least one indicator of increased opportunities for student involvement that was a result directly attributable to their peer program. Almost all respondents (93%) reported two or more increased opportunities for student involvement indicators that were directly attributed to their peer program.

Latino Outreach

Whitewater High School
Whitewater Unified School District
CESA #2

Advisor: Rhona Quinn

Type of Peer Program: Peer Leadership

Latino Outreach is an extra-curricular program for Hispanic students to develop leadership skills by providing service to the Whitewater school district and community. The program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by engaging Hispanic students in community and family activities that will result in students seeing themselves in positive roles and as a result increase their self-esteem/asset development. Service activities included organizing and leading: 1) several Celebration of Diversity Days at the high school; 2) a Hispanic Family Health Fair to help students and their parents understand medical terms and genetically transmitted diseases; 3) an open forum for Hispanic families to ask questions of a bilingual attorney; 4) several bilingual forums where parents, students, SAP Coordinator, and Police Liaison Officers talked about gangs, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, crime, and the law; 5) several Holiday Fiestas for little children; and 6) purchasing holiday gifts for needy children. Students also serve as sitters for the adult English as a Second Language classes.

A major effort of the Latino Outreach Program a few years ago was to educate the parents of Hispanic students about gangs and how to identify markings of gang membership. To help increase the participation of parents, the Latino Outreach members provided babysitting service for their children so they could attend the anti-gang program. As a direct result of increased parental understanding about gang activity and signs of membership there have been less conflicts in school and after school. Latino Outreach activities also include the teaching of presentation skills so that members can present at local service club meetings, practice group facilitation skills, and learn how to ask others for their opinion so that members can more easily participate in classes.

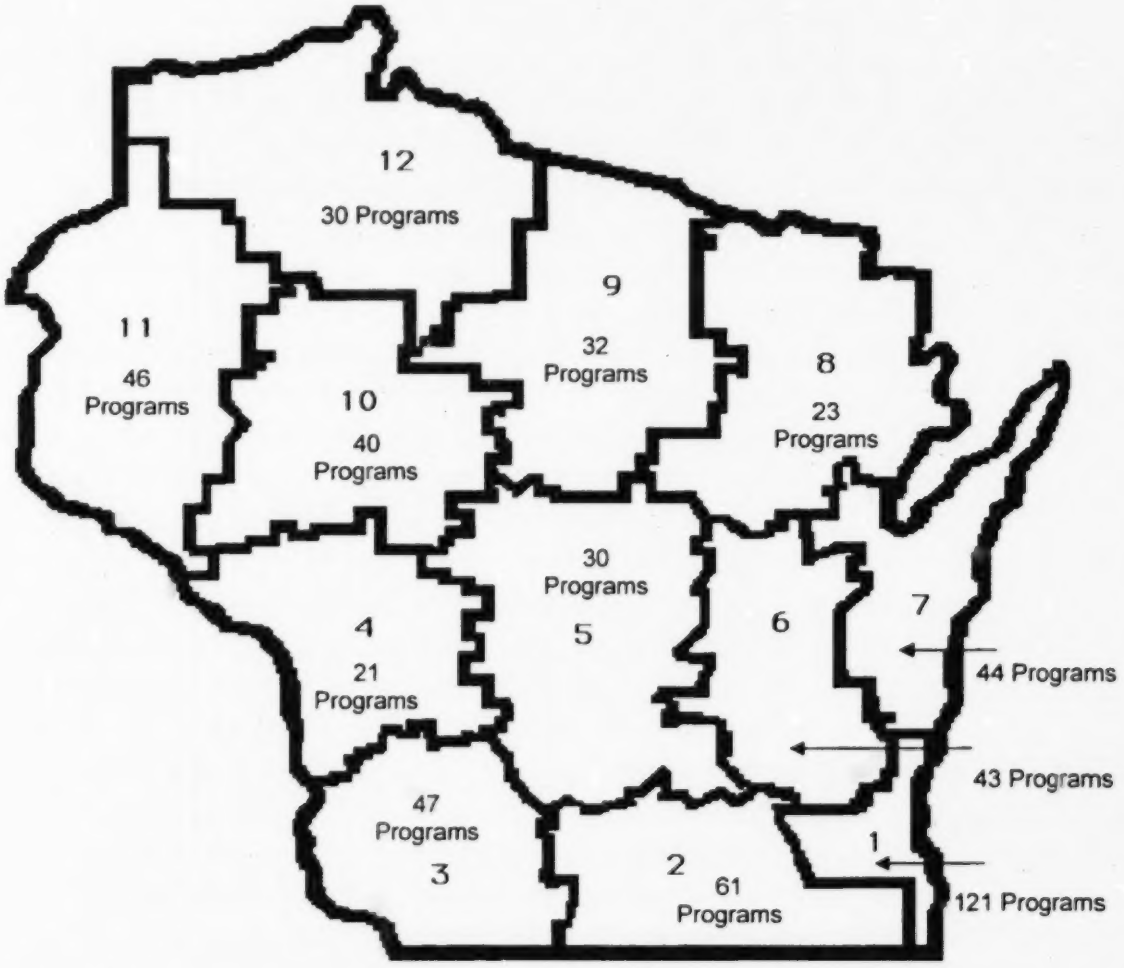
Latino Outreach peer leaders also represent Latino student opinion as student advisors on school hiring and planning committees and express issues of concern within the high school and advocate their opinions to school officials and teachers.

For members of the Latino Outreach Program, academics are first. Members who are bilingual provide peer tutoring so that others can more quickly learn to read and speak English. Of great importance, the program has helped to reduce the drop-out rate of Latino students and increased the Latino graduation rate at Whitewater High School.

Results and Conclusions

Conclusion #1: Peer–led programs to prevent or reduce important health problems exist widely in all parts of Wisconsin, within varying district sizes, school enrollment, and across all grade levels.

Figure 1. Geographic Distribution of Peer Programs by Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA)



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

Peer Leaders

West Junior High School
Wisconsin Rapids Public School District
CESA #5

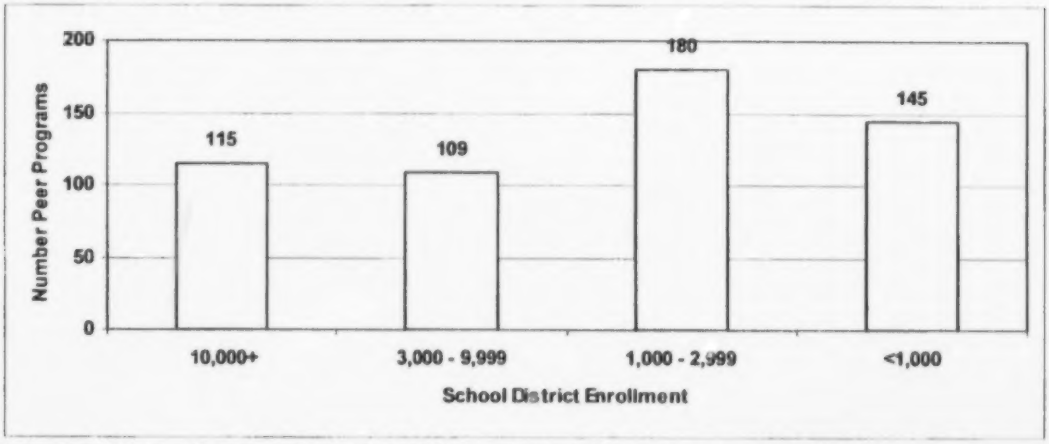
Advisor: Gretchen Niedbalski

Type of Peer Program: Peer Leadership

The Peer Leaders Program is specifically designed to reduce AODA behaviors by helping students successfully transition from their small rural elementary schools to a relatively large middle school; West Junior High School. Three major activities focus Peer Leaders' efforts during the school year. In the spring, Peer Leaders travel with the advisor to their respective elementary schools to explain to 6th graders what it will be like at the middle school and how they have made the adjustment. The Peer Leaders answer questions on a student-to-student basis. In the fall, for the first two weeks of school, all Peer Leaders wear jerseys that identify them as Peer Leaders. As Peer Leaders, they are available to assist the new 7th graders in finding classrooms, assist in mediating disputes with their new classmates, or assist in helping them adjust to several new teachers. Throughout the school year, the Peer Leaders meet every other week with school administrators to talk about what they are doing as Peer Leaders, present their perspective about problems that students may be having in school, and present their ideas about what might improve student relations within the middle school. Seventh graders at West Junior High School must apply to be Peer Leaders in the spring of the 7th grade, have a grade point average of 2.5 or better, and have signed a Code of Conduct to be considered for participation as a Peer Leader. Current Peer Leaders review the applications and recommend who should be interviewed for participation by the advisor. The advisor makes final decisions on who will be a Peer Leader during the next school year.

Students have commented in many ways over the years about how good it was to know that a Peer Leader was there to help them the first few weeks of being in the middle school. Perhaps most critical to their successful transition, many 7th graders have told about how a Peer Leader had helped to clarify or helped to process information and as a result they had a better opportunity to develop a positive student-teacher relationship.

Table 1. Distribution of Peer Programs by School District Enrollment.

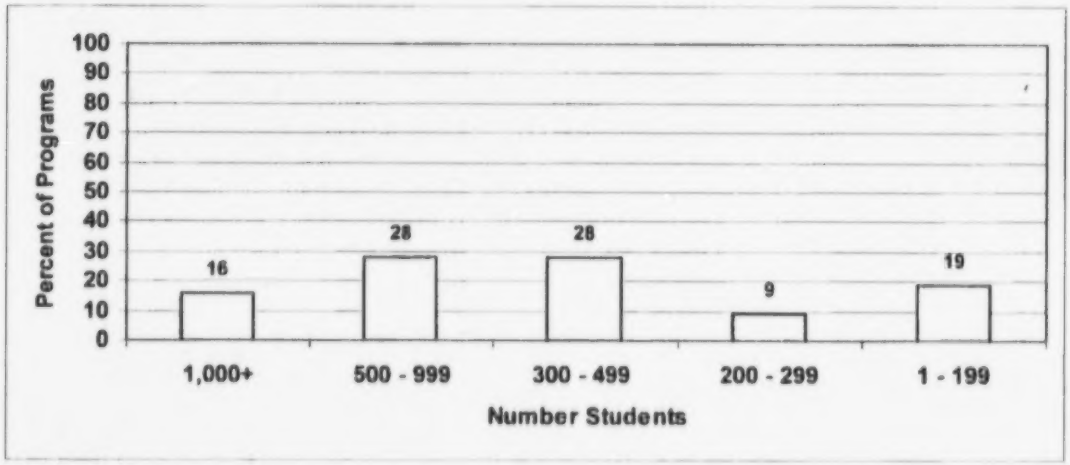


Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- One-third of all peer programs in Wisconsin (180 of 549 programs) were in school districts with enrollments of 1,000 – 2,999 students. The majority of peer programs 325 of 549 (59%) were located in school districts of 2,999 or less students.

Table 2. Distribution of Peer Programs by School Enrollment.

Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.



- The majority Wisconsin's peer programs (56%) are in schools with enrollments of less than 500 students.

T.E.P.A. Program

Washington Jr. High
Manitowoc School District
CESA #7

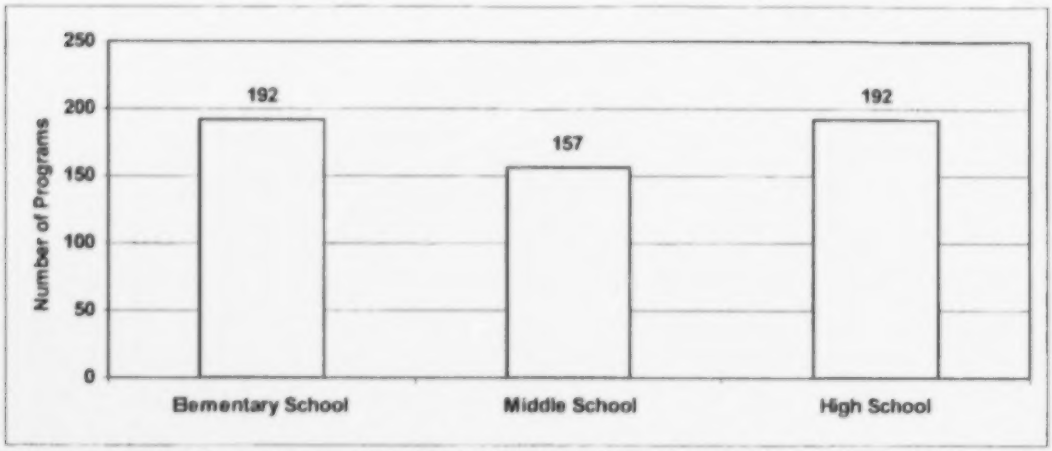
Advisor: Jill Donohue

Type of Peer Program: Peer Education

The Teens Educating Peers about AIDS (T.E.P.A.) Program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by having 7th and 8th grade students teach their middle school peers about HIV. Students interested in helping their peers understand HIV agree to attend the Manitowoc HIV Leader Training Program in October of each school year. Students then meet to plan a full year of activities, decide on what they will need for resources, and how they will present HIV information. Activities have included presentations to health classes and at the school's annual Health Fair, making lunchroom displays about planned activities to spark student interest, walking in the National AIDS Day, participating in the Milwaukee HIV March, and raising dollars for Camp Hartland.

The strength of the Program is that students are empowered to make their own agenda of activities to educate other children. As a result, throughout the school year, all students in the middle school hear about, receive new information about, and ask questions of their peers about HIV. Of great importance, there has been a noticeable increase in peer leaders' sense of belonging to their school community, greater peer group acceptance of HIV as a disease, and school wide acceptance of a HIV-positive student. Many of the peer leaders have continued educate others about HIV during their high school and college years. One of the Program's peer leaders recently won a national HIV Award for his presentation about AIDS.

Table 3. Distribution of Peer Programs by grade level.

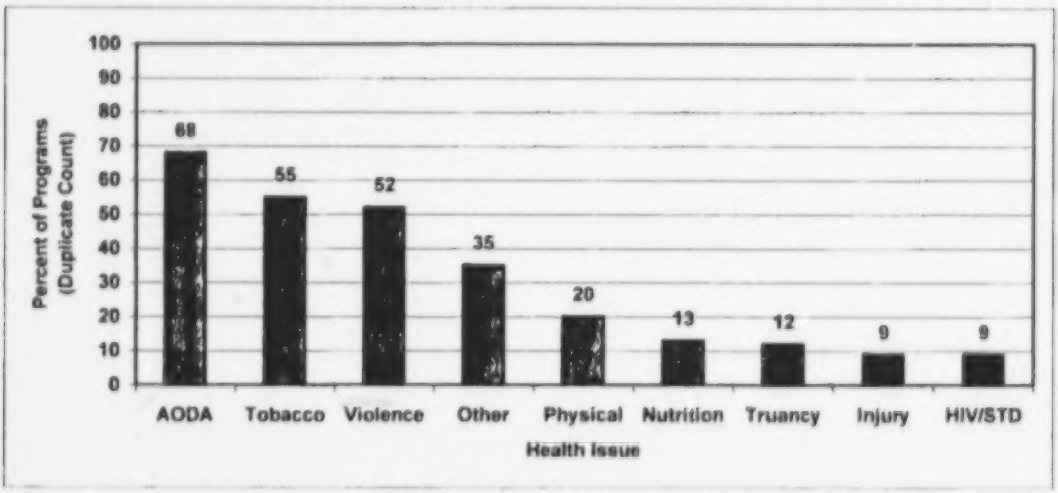


Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- The distribution of the 549 schools by grade level that reported state funded AODA Peer Programs was almost evenly distributed across levels. (Note: 8 programs did not indicate grade level)

Conclusion #2. Peer programs in Wisconsin schools address a variety of important health issues. Almost half (45%) of all programs address AODA and tobacco. Almost two-thirds (62%) of peer programs address AODA or tobacco health issues. This is consistent with the purpose of state funding that peer programs must target alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse related issues.

Table 4. Health Issues Addressed by Peer Programs (duplicated count).



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Typical "other" health issues addressed by peer programs included: conflict resolution, asset management, character education, and making healthy decisions.

AODA After School Program

Elementary School
Menominee Indian School District
CESA #8

Advisors: Linda Bangert, Ann Waniger, and Myrtle Mahkimetas

Type of Peer Program: Peer Helper/Support

The AODA After School Program involves teachers, support staff, high school students (special education and gifted/talented students) and community volunteers working with small groups of students in grades K-5. The program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by providing several opportunities for elementary school students to engage in activities that will increase their self-esteem/asset development.

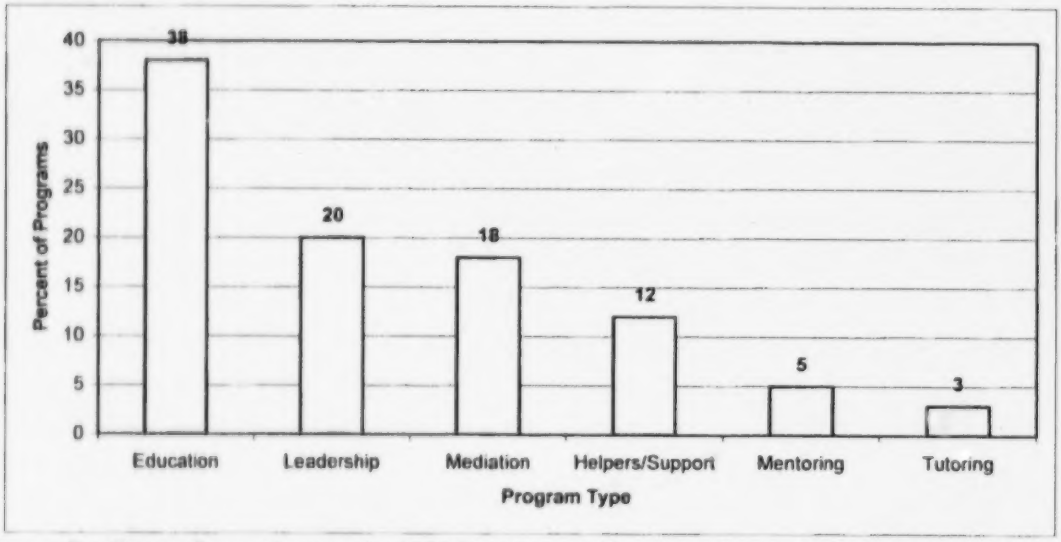
The program takes place after school between 3:15 and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Three teachers act as head coordinators of three programs: reading and math improvement, enrichment activities, and intramural sports. The reading and math improvement component provides individualized and small-group tutoring to beginning readers in the first grade and some at-risk second graders. Assessments indicate that beginning readers who participate in these services improve in their classes and also have improved scores on district tests.

The enrichment component focuses on activities that help children learn skills related to their community; such as making snowshoes, basket weaving, painting, and other Menominee crafts. The intramural sports component includes after-school play as well as basketball and soccer games with other schools.

An important feature of the program is the bonding that occurs between older and younger students. Other noticeable changes among students have included a decrease in the number of discipline problems after school between high school students and the after school program students. All children are recognized with an end of the year program celebration that was attended by 235 parents who came to witness their children's achievements. All people involved in the Program were given special recognition at the Menominee Education Pow-Wow for their donated services. The biggest problem the program now faces is having more requests for tutoring and enrichment activities than the program has people to provide services.

Conclusion #3. Peer programs in Wisconsin schools exist in a variety of forms, most commonly peer education, peer leadership, and peer mediation.

Table 5. Types of Wisconsin peer programs.



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Of 549 peer programs, three-fourths emphasized education (38%), leadership (20%), or mediation (18%). (Note: 23 programs did not identify their type of peer program)

Youth Voices . . .

"We go to classrooms in our school and talk about peer pressures, decisions, friendship skills, and how to react to these situations."

"We do skits to teach people about certain situations. How to make decisions about relationships and drugs. Skills you need to know at our age."

"We focus on what kids may decide to do when they get to high school, and help them to understand what might happen if they did start to smoke."

Badger Service Club

Badger Elementary School
Appleton School District
CESA # 6

Advisor: Jaynie Busche

Type of Peer Program: Peer Helpers/Support

The Badger Service Club is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by engaging students in service teams that provide opportunities for students to see themselves in positive roles, and as a result increase their self-esteem/asset development.

In the seventh year of operation, the Badger Service Club is made up of 1st through 6th grade students elected in the fall of each school year. At the beginning of school in the fall, students follow the program based on the "Do Something" training staff received from Cooperative Educational Service Area #6 that focuses on team building and how to empower other students who become involved to be members of service teams. Other training places emphasis on helping students and their advisor plan a full year of service activities that will involve as many students as possible. Service projects have included a Litter Pick Up Campaign, food drive, school announcements, adopt-a-family, school spirit days, make a school garden, help write a AODA funding grant and sign the application, and fund raising efforts such as "ice cream days" and a popcorn sale. A big occasion each year is organizing teams of workers for Carnival Days which engages all students in work teams to decide what games they will play, who will do what during the day, and activities to support the Carnival Days theme.

An unanticipated outcome of the Badger Service Club emphasis on "students making decisions for students" has been the 2nd and 4th grade students organizing themselves to run the school store, stock it, and make their own work schedule.

Conclusion #4. Peer programs in Wisconsin's schools were initiated for a wide variety of reasons, especially to address specific AODA problems or issues.

Table 6. Reasons for initiating peer programs (Duplicated Count).

Number of Advisors Reporting	Reason for Initiating Peer Program
367	To address a specific problem or issue
341	Supported by AODA Funding
258	Initiated by one individual (teacher, counselor, administrator)
182	Recommended in a professional development program (conference, workshop, course)
179	Teachers/staff requested it
175	Students requested it
140	Recommended in professional literature (journal, books, newsletter, databases)
120	Recommended by another school or district
95	Recommended by community, state, or federal agency
77	Administration requested it
72	Other reasons
8	School Board requested it

Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Of the 549 peer programs, the most common reason for initiating 367 of 549 (67%) of the schools was to address a specific AODA problem or issue. Support of AODA funding was a very common reason (62%) as was leadership by one individual (47%).

Youth Voices . . .

"The best part of our TATU program is helping the little kids and making a difference in their lives even if it is only for one or two."

"We do a skit and then role-play with the group about good ways to handle conflict. We go to all the fourth grade rooms."

"I learned teamwork and communication skills in peer education."

Peacekeepers

Tomahawk Elementary School
Tomahawk School District
CESA #9

Advisor: Mary Ingman

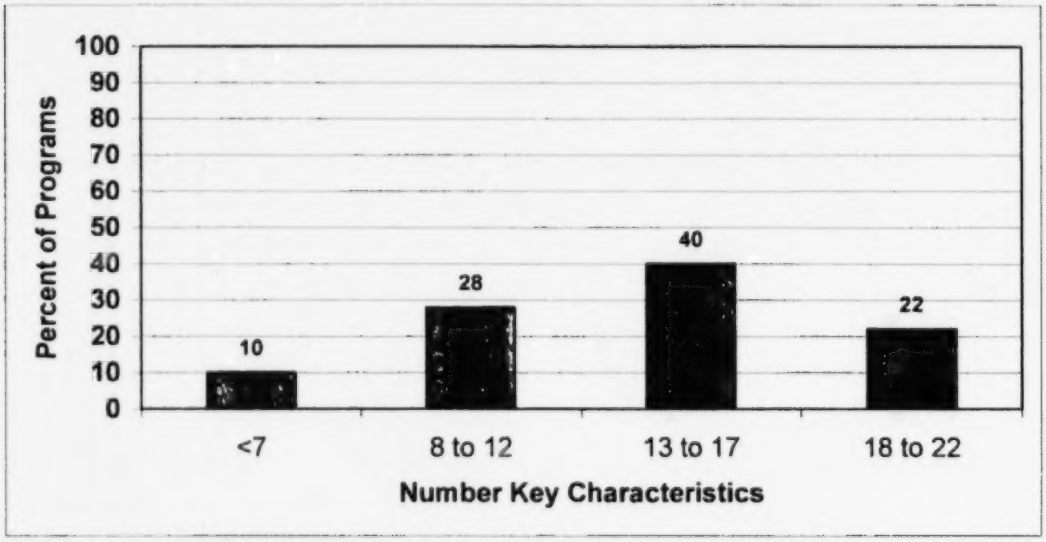
Type of Peer Program: Peer Mediation

Tomahawk Elementary School Peacekeepers is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by increasing student self-esteem/assets that results when students practice and use conflict resolution skills to resolve peer disputes. The program consists of 20 4th grade Peace Ambassadors and 20 fifth grade Peer Mediators. The fourth grade Peace Ambassadors are selected by their peers and teachers and are responsible for promoting an ongoing awareness of the program. Upon completion of 4th grade, the Peace Ambassadors automatically move into their new role as 5th grade Peer Mediators. Typical mediations involve inter-student conflicts for teasing, arguing, gossiping, taking someone else's property, and pushing in line. Any conflicts of a physical nature are not handled by the mediators but are referred to the school office. Mediations are conducted at a specific scheduled time of day and in a location that offers privacy for those involved. There is also a Peacekeeper Circle, combination sign/bench, out on the playground where students may go to work out problems they may have during recess. Mediators do not solve the problem for the students but guide them through steps that enable the students to solve their own problem. A written peer mediation contract that outlines what each person agrees to is then signed by the disputant and respondent. A Peacekeeper pencil is given to both parties upon the successful completion of mediation.

Responsibility among students for working out their differences and problems has become a part of the school climate and has noticeably influenced the willingness of students to help one another in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

Conclusion #5. Peer programs in Wisconsin possess a very strong majority of the key characteristics of design, implementation, and resources associated with effective programs. Ninety-one percent (91%) of all peer programs in Wisconsin schools possess to some degree at least 18 or more of the 22 key characteristics of effective programs.

Table 7. Programs having key characteristics "To A Great Extent".



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Almost two-thirds of Wisconsin peer programs possess *"To a Great Extent"* between 13 and 22 of the key characteristics of program design, implementation and resources of effective programs

Youth Voices . . .

"The most important part of our peer program is that it put together a group of caring, involved, students to help peers."

"Members in our peer program talk with 5th graders about drugs, alcohol and peer pressure."

"Our group uses different games and activities to get our point across."

STARS

Glenwood City Elementary School
CESA #11

Advisor: Jim Celt

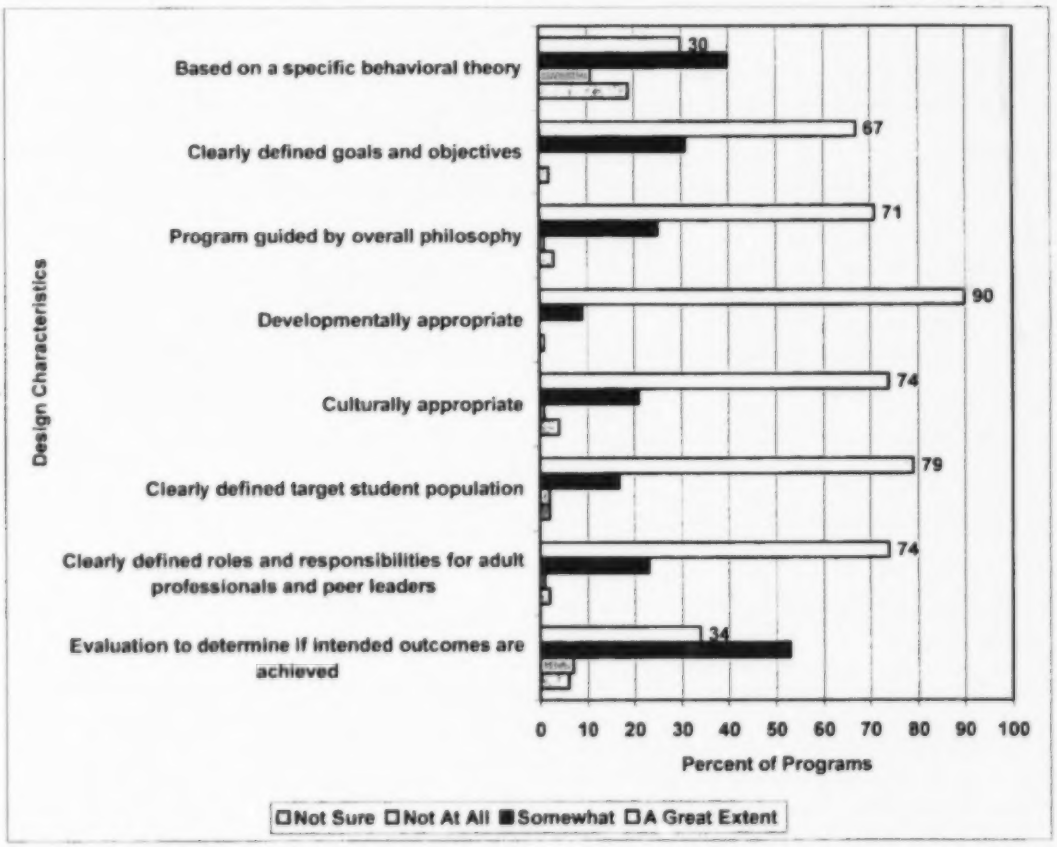
Type of Peer Program: Peer Tutoring

Students and Teachers After Regular School (S.T.A.R.S.) is an after school tutoring program for 4th through 8th grade students designed to reduce AODA behaviors by developing kids' academic assets through older students serving as a mentor/tutor. Tutoring sessions are conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. by a team of three high school students, three elementary school teachers and one junior high school teacher. Students are nominated by their teachers to participate in STARS. The only condition for acceptance into STARS is the parent's agreement to pick up their child after the tutoring session. In the third year of operation, STARS regularly serves 40 students needing tutoring in all school subjects. Student participants are rarely absent from tutoring sessions. Every month participants are given a reward such as a movie and pizza, a visit to the local amusement center, a sliding party in the winter, or a "pop and popcorn" party.

A very obvious outcome of the STARS program has been a decrease in truancy rates among the participants and an increase in students graduating with their class into middle school. Wide acceptance of the program is evidenced in current efforts to expand STARS into the local high school.

Conclusion #6. Each of the key characteristics of design, implementation, and resources of effective programs are present in all Wisconsin peer programs. The following three tables summarize survey respondents' reporting of program design, implementation, and resources key characteristics.

Table 8. Program design key characteristics.



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Six of eight design key characteristics of effective peer programs are present *"To A Great Extent"* 67% or more of all peer programs.

Youth Voices . . .

"Our TATU program really makes a difference by having peers teach to the 4th graders. The 4th graders look up to the older students and see them as role models. Trying to prevent it from happening instead of fixing it after it happens."

"The guidance counselors are our advisors. We have a different program for each grade from 1 – 6. Every year we teach the same lesson for 1st grade, 2nd grade, etc. We have a one-day training."

"I help students who have questions. I listen."

Cross Talks

Rufus King High School
Milwaukee
CESA #1

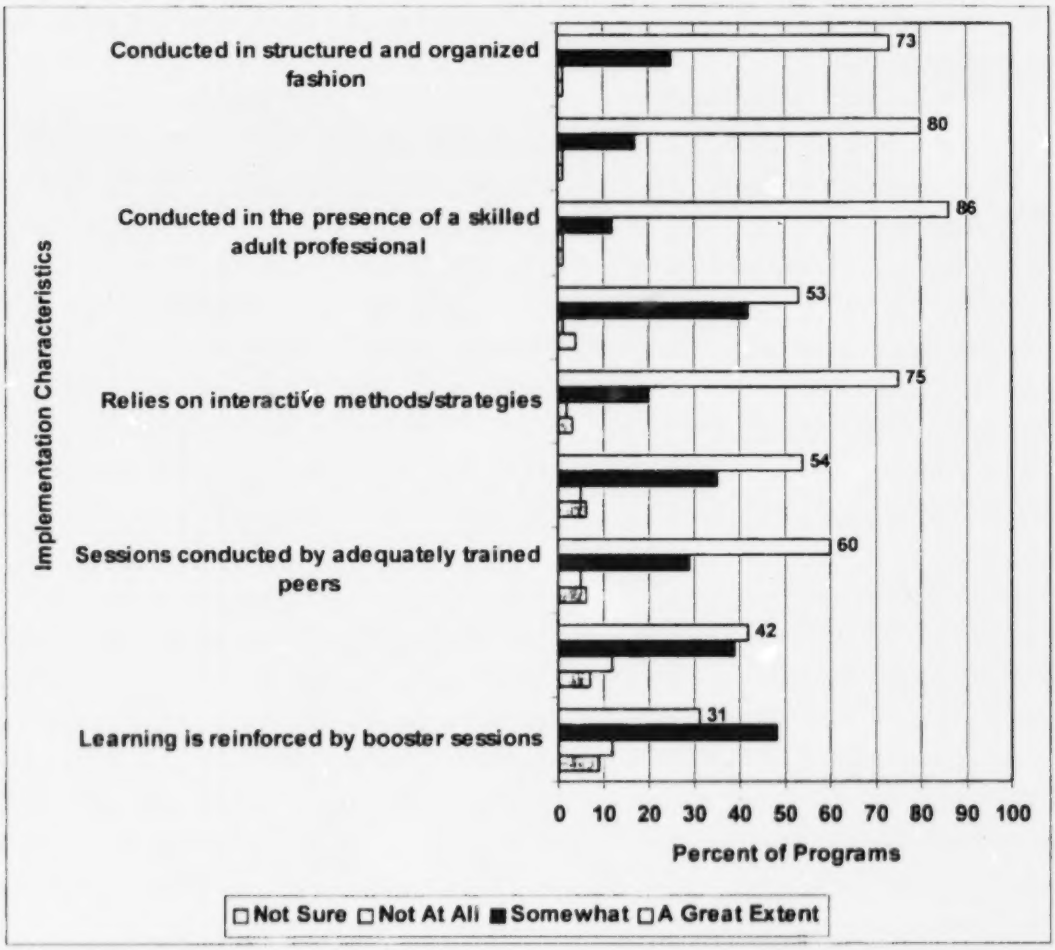
Advisor: Brenda Mikell

Type of Peer Program: Peer Education

Cross Talks is a program designed to reduce AODA behaviors by having high school students make one hour presentations to elementary school students about the "real effects" of alcohol and other drug abuse. Each year the program involves 30 students at Rufus King High School who travel to approximately ten collaborating Milwaukee elementary schools. During each school visit, the 30 Cross Talk leaders work in teams of three and make presentations to approximately ten different classrooms. After each presentation, the high school presenters leave a "hot line" contact card with each of the younger students. High school students must apply to be presenters. Each applicant must complete a lengthy application, secure at least one teacher's recommendation, have the required grade point average, and have an excellent school attendance record. Presenters also sign an agreement to be drug and alcohol free. Students selected to be Cross Talks presenters receive a day of training in the early fall. The training occurs on a Saturday.

Most of the student presenters have become active in this extra curricular activity because they want to work with younger children, become positive role models, and because they are committed to being drug and alcohol free themselves. A major outcome of the Cross Talks program is the development of leadership skills and increased self-esteem among students who lead Cross Talk sessions, along with a deeper knowledge of the effects of drugs and alcohol for the younger students.

Table 9. Program implementation key characteristics.



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Seven of nine implementation key characteristics of effective peer programs are present *"To A Great Extent"* in 53% or more of all peer programs.

Youth Voices . . .

"We get two summer days of training and we practice about once every 3 weeks to a month."

"The presenters at our training were awesome!"

"We get two days training in the spring and 5-6 practices during the school year to be peer leaders."

Friends Helping Friends

Doudna Elementary School
Richland School District
CESA #3

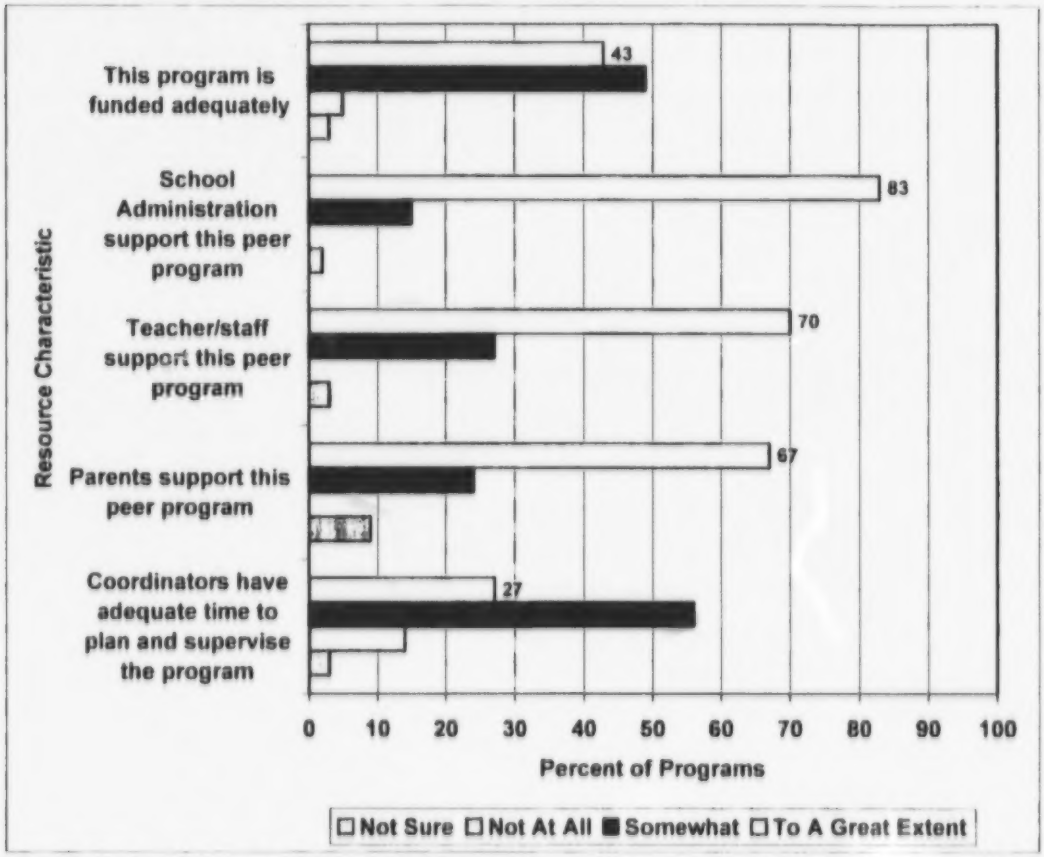
Advisor: Mike Curtis

Type of Peer Program: Peer Mentoring

Friends Helping Friends is a peer mentoring program involving 6th grade mentors paired with K-2 students. The program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by focusing on developing a positive self-image of K-2 students who have exhibited low self-esteem, isolation from other children, difficulty with group tasks, or difficulty playing with other children. In the spring of each school year, 24 peer mentors are selected by teachers and the guidance counselor to receive a one-day training from the program's advisor. The training is an adaptation of the University of Wisconsin Extension "Friends Helping Friends" program for senior high school students that has been jointly developed by the advisor and the University of Wisconsin Extension County Youth Leadership Development Specialist. The trained peer mentors (12 boys and 12 girls) are paired with a K-2nd grade student (boys with boys and girls with girls). Particular attention is given to including a variety of children who have exhibited the potential of becoming peer leaders, not just those who are well behaved or doing well academically. The highlight of each school year is observing the emergence of smiles among the selected K-2 grade students, peer acceptance on the playground, increased academic performance, and the special care each child takes in maintaining their special friendship with their respective 6th grade mentor.

Among the key factors for making the peer mentoring program a continuing success are: keeping the peer mentoring format a one-to-one relationship, scheduling of the paired students to periodically meet during the school day in a private place, teacher support in scheduling private time, and the relationship with University of Wisconsin Extension.

Table 10. Program resources key characteristics.



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- Three of five resources characteristics of effective peer programs (School Administration, Teacher/staff and Parent Support) are present *"To A Great Extent"* in 67% or more of all peer programs.

Youth Voices . . .

"I first got involved because my mom encouraged me."

"My 6th grade science teacher sent me a letter inviting me to a peer leadership training camp."

"I first got involved by a letter from our principal that asked if I would like to be involved in peer education. I have been involved for over a year and I really like it."

Problem Busters

Randall Elementary School
School District of Waukesha
CESA #1

Advisor: Phyllis Lardinois

Type of Peer Program: Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution

The Problem Busters Program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by increasing student self-esteem/assets that result when students practice and use conflict resolution skills to resolve peer disputes. Children are taught to talk with one another rather than "tattling" or going to a mediator. The basis of the program begins with instruction by the counselor in each classroom, Kindergarten through grade six. Primary classrooms are provided with a "tool box" that contains five colored blocks with instructions on each such as "Breathe deeply," "Think," "Be calm," "Count to 10," "Say, I feel ___ about ____" and "Say, "How about _____." When students have a conflict, they are provided with a private place to resolve their conflict using the blocks.

A variation of the tool box is also used on the playground. Students in 5th and 6th grades are trained to be "Problem Busters" who help younger students resolve conflicts using the two "talking" blocks of the tool box. Students trained as Problem Busters wear bright yellow jackets and carry a little pouch with the tool box blocks and "certificates." When students have a conflict, they approach the Problem Buster student to use the blocks. Upon successful resolution of the conflict, each student is given two small "certificates" with pictures of children playing on a playground and the words "I talked out a problem on the playground today." One "certificate" is to give to the child's teacher; the other is to take home to his or her parent(s). When students are unable to resolve conflicts on their own, they have an opportunity to meet with the counselor for additional help.

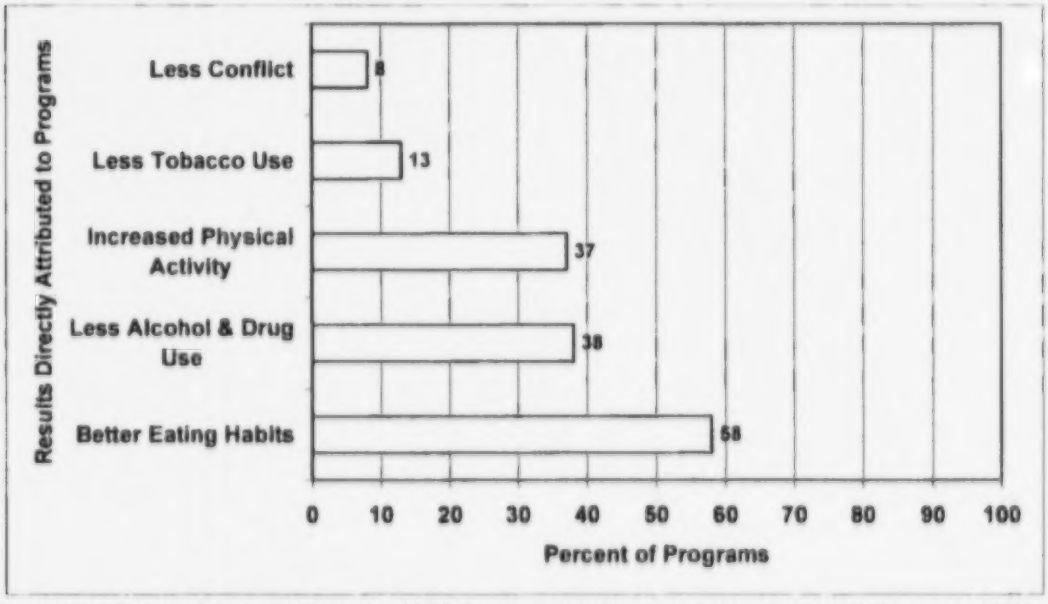
Lasting effects of this novel approach have been incorporation of conflict resolution language into the daily vocabulary of students, students working out their conflicts on their own, and recognizing when they require assistance.

Perceived Program Benefits

Peer programs in Wisconsin's schools have multiple perceived benefits and many positive results. These include reduced health risks, safer school environments, enhanced learning climate, and greater opportunities for student involvement in school programs.

Perceived Program Benefit: Reduced health risks to students. More than three-fourths of the respondents (80%) identified the reduction of at least one health risk to students that was a result attributable to their peer program. Thirty-eight percent identified less alcohol and other drug use, 13% identified less tobacco use.

Table 11. Reduced health risks to students (duplicated count).



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

Youth Voices . . .

"Teaching students about cigarettes was a success at the lock-in because the kids were very grossed out by the information we gave them."

"I like being involved in the T.A.T.U. Program because it focused on what kids may decide to do when they get to high school, and helps them to understand what might happen to them if they did start to smoke."

Arrive Alive

Osseo-Fairchild High School
Osseo-Fairchild School District
CESA# 10

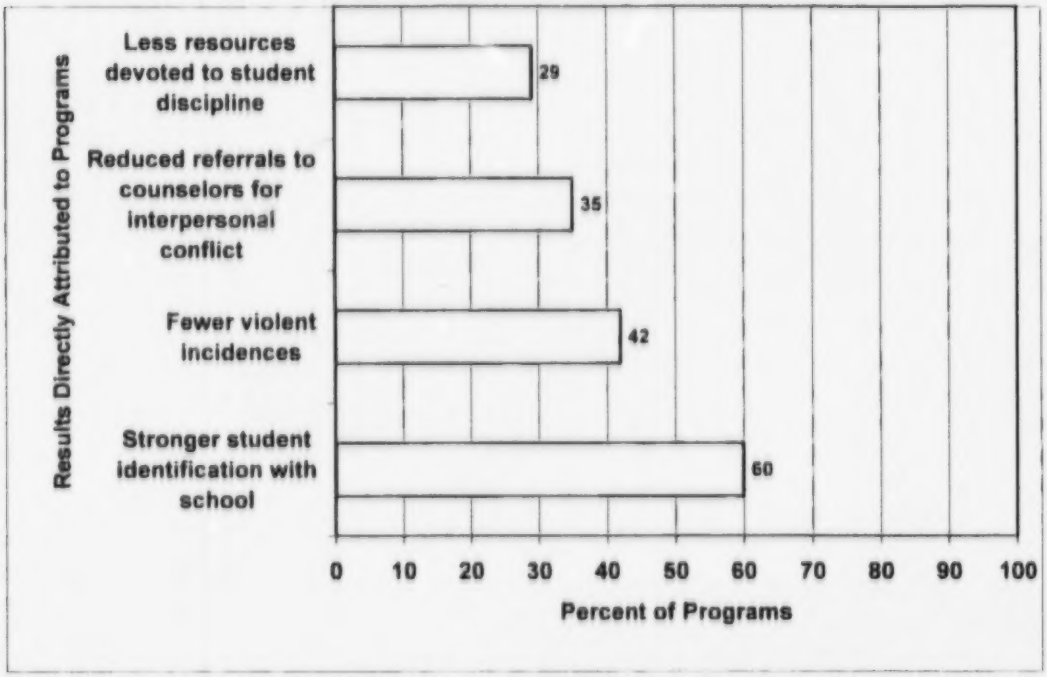
Advisor: Juanita Rosenberg

Type of Peer Program: Peer Education

Arrive Alive is a comprehensive approach to AODA prevention and covers all risk behaviors. The program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by having peers perform skits to inform their fellow students about the adverse impact of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and how HIV is transmitted. In the fall of each school year, students volunteer to be Arrive Alive leaders and receive a two-day training in improvisational acting and facilitation from Cornerstone Productions of St. Paul, Minnesota. The students plan eight skits that are designed to involve many students as actors and then deliver the skits in classrooms throughout the school year. The skits are preformed using music that has lyrics about the adverse impact of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and how HIV is transmitted. The skits involve students from all socio-economic segments of the student population, special education students, as well as students who are often non-participants in extra-curricular activities. In addition to the actors, many students are involved in supporting roles involving lighting, playing music, making and setting up props, public relations and information, etc. Prior to graduation, the Arrive Alive members receive training at Cooperative Educational Service Agency #10 and present a major performance to all junior and seniors about driving under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs. Some years a major skit is performed for the general public. A mark of student interest is holding rehearsals at 5:30 to 7:15 a.m. before the school day starts or as late as 8:30 to 11:00 p.m. on a school night to make sure the skits are performed to a high level of quality. The Arrive Alive members have presented to two other schools, one of which has decided to start a similar group of improvisational players to get the message out to students about AODA risk behaviors.

Perceived Program Benefit: Safer school environments. About three-fourths (78%) of respondents identified at least one indicator of a safer school environment that was a result attributable to their peer program. Almost half of the programs, 48%, identified at least two or more indicators of safer school environments that were attributable to their peer program.

Table 12. Indicators of safer school environments (duplicated count).


Results Directly Attributed to Programs
Less resources devoted to student discipline
29
Reduced referrals to counselors for interpersonal conflict
35
Fewer violent incidences
42
Stronger student identification with school
60
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percent of Programs

Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- The majority of the peer programs (60%) reported their program had resulted in stronger student identification with school.
- Forty-two percent reported fewer incidences of violence and about one third of all peer programs reported reduced referrals to counselors for interpersonal conflict.

Youth Voices . . .

"Now I look at friendship, decision making, and peer pressure differently – the program has influenced me personally."

"I got to know more people and now I know what it feels like to be a teacher when the kids don't listen. It's hard."

"The toughest part of being a peer leader is convincing students that some things aren't always the right things to do even though everyone else does them."

Alma Supporting Players

Alma Area Schools
CESA #4

Advisor: Lois Balk

Type of Peer Program: Peer Leadership

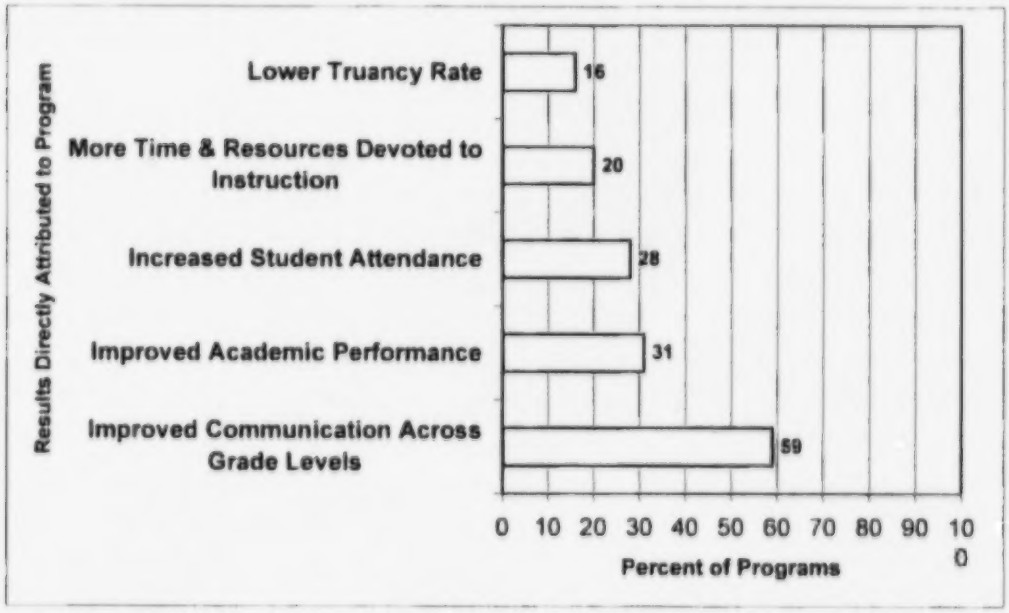
The Alma Supporting Players is a peer leadership program designed to reduce AODA by having high school youth perform skits relating to the dangers associated with tobacco and alcohol consumption. The skits are performed for the district's junior and senior high students throughout the year and during prom and graduation weeks. These skits maximize the potential for an increase in positive behavior among youth. Other skits the students perform pertain to drug abuse, peer pressure, and other negative youth behaviors. The Alma Supporting Players have also performed for the local tobacco coalition and for local service organizations.

Each year, the students who join the Alma Supporting Players are trained at a workshop sponsored by Cooperative Educational Service Agency #4 where they learn how to generate ideas for their skits, act, and write skits they will perform. A mark of the students' dedication is their willingness to attend practice sessions at 7:00 a.m. in the morning before their school day starts. The most apparent impact of the Alma Supporting Players has been their indirect influence on the growth of the Youth Alliance for a Drug-Free Alma (YADFA). Over the past nine years, YADFA membership has increased from only 5 members to 50 youth in 2002. Factors that have contributed to the success of the Players include: starting small, not expecting too much in the beginning, Cooperative Educational Service Agency # 4 training experience, and advisor support and counsel when they are "put down" by their peers for not "joining them" in their parties.

Perhaps the strongest testimony of support for this program is the appreciation among educators and parents that the students can be empowered to take leadership roles not only through the skits, but in speaking to their peers and to community organizations about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Perceived Program Benefit: Enhanced learning climate. A very strong majority (76%) of respondents reported at least one indicator of an enhanced learning climate that was a result directly attributable to their peer program. Somewhat less than half of the programs (42%) reported two or more enhanced learning climate indicators that were directly attributed to their peer program.

Table 13. Indicators of Enhanced Learning Climate (Duplicated count).



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- The majority of the peer programs (59%) reported their program had resulted in improved student communication across grade levels.
- Nearly one-third reported improved academic performance (31%) and increased attendance (28%).

Youth Voices . . .

"I'm involved because I want to help younger students stay on the right track and feel comfortable and confident."

"The most important part of being a member of our AODA Program is making an influence on my other peers and underclassmen."

"I like being a peer educator because it puts together a group of caring, involved students to help others."

Spartan Peer Mentor Program

Superior High School
Superior School District
CESA #12

Advisors: Mike Matejka and Gary Banker

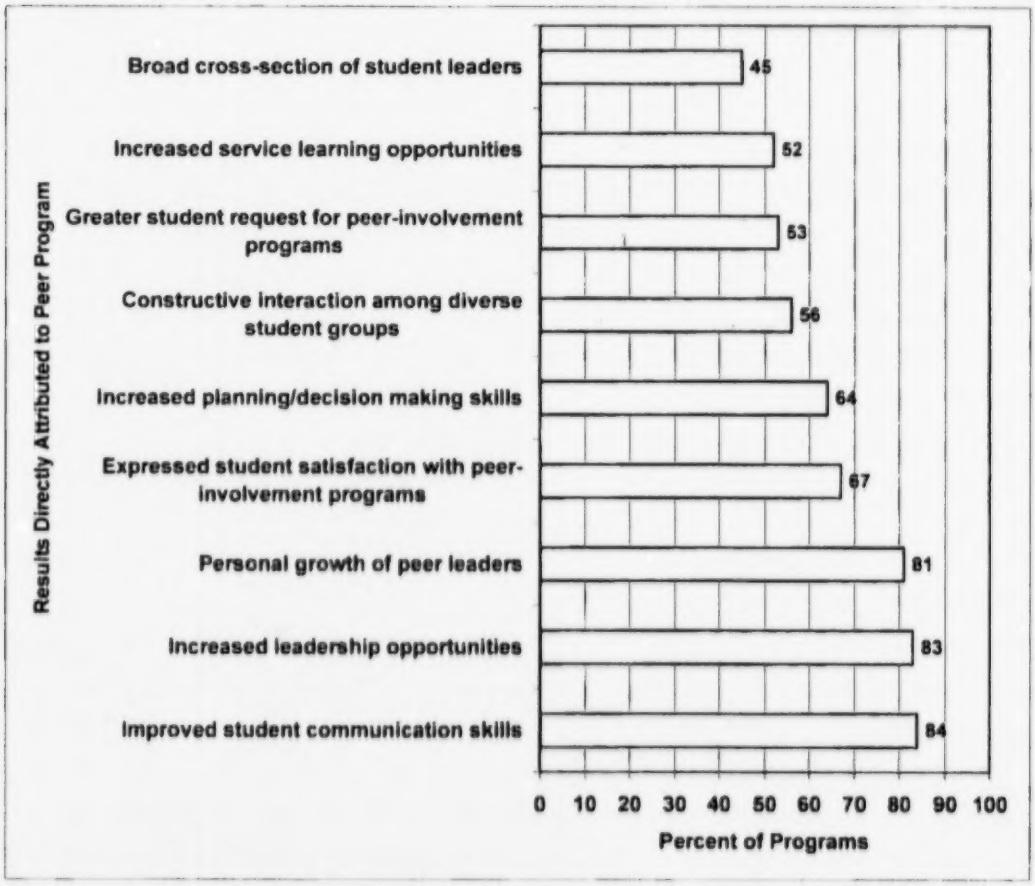
Type of Peer Program: Peer Mentoring

The Spartan Peer Mentor Program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by facilitating a positive transition of two different middle schools' graduating 8th graders into a very large high school building of over 1,000 students. As a direct result of this program, the number of student discipline issues has decreased, less tension is apparent in the hallways, and the number of 9th grade failing grades has decreased. Of particular note to the overall school climate, 9th grade student participation has increased in the all-school tail gate party before the first fall football game, and the number of students involved in building of the 9th grade homecoming float has increased. Over 200 sophomore, junior, and senior students apply for the 70 mentor positions. The major motivation among older students wanting to be a peer mentor is their remembering how difficult it was as a 9th grader to get started and just to make friends with other students.

Success of the mentoring program was evidenced this school year when the decision was made to move the mentoring focus out of Home Rooms and into a special "Advisory Session" held each day after the third regular class session. Home Room continues to handle regular school attendance, announcements, and support other school logistical concerns while the "Advisory Session" focuses on peer mentoring efforts that are less hurried by the time constraints of a regular Home Room period.

Perceived Program Benefit: Increased opportunities for student involvement and other benefits. Almost all respondents (97%) reported at least one indicator of increased opportunities for student involvement that was a result directly attributable to their peer program. Almost all respondents (93%) reported two or more increased opportunities for student involvement indicators that were directly attributed to their peer program.

Table 14. Indicators of increased opportunities for student involvement and other benefits (Duplicated count).



Source: Peer Program Survey administered to AODA Coordinators in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2002.

- The most common opportunities reported for increased student involvement included improved communication skills (84%), leadership (83%), and personal growth (81%).

Youth Voices . . .

"The most important part of our peer program is that we help people understand what we're doing and what they should do."

"We help others understand that things that happen... to one person can happen to others."

"What would I tell others who want to be a Peer Educator? ... ***Go for it! It's a lot of fun!"***

Teens Who Care

Accelerated Middle School
Milwaukee
CESA #1

Advisor: David Weingrod

Type of Peer Program: Peer Leadership

Teens Who Care is a citywide program in 15 Milwaukee middle schools. This peer leadership program is designed to reduce AODA behaviors by having students experience themselves in positive roles as a result of being involved in community service, dealing with AODA prevention, and thus making a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. The Teens Who Care program represents positive asset development for members and for their school peers. As a result of this program, students become involved in a variety of after-school activities such as: visiting elderly care facilities, a citywide clean-up effort, tutoring and mentoring their peers after and during the school day, making anti-tobacco presentations, or running various activities at a teen center after school. Every fall, about 150 students from Milwaukee's middle schools receive training at a two-day, overnight retreat. The training focuses on team building and helping students to plan how they would like to improve their respective schools. After the retreat, students are selected from among those who want to assume leadership responsibility for their school's Teens Who Care program and they attend a three-day leadership development training activity with their advisor.

The key to each school's Teens Who Care program is that the youth leaders decide what projects they will have during the school year and then the leadership team recruits the students to make each of the projects really happen. Perhaps most important to the success of these programs is that each student self-selects to become involved in the Teens Who Care program.

Recommendations

In accordance with Wisconsin legislative requirements to monitor programs supported with state AODA funds, this report focused on peer programs in part supported with state AODA funding during the 2001-02 school year. The field study was conducted by independent contractor, the Center on Education and Work, UW-Madison. The literature review and research instruments were developed with the Center for Applied Behavioral Evaluation and Research at the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, DC.

The study described a large number of Wisconsin peer programs, most of which posses characteristics of effective programs identified in research literature. The purpose, design, and implementation of programs were closely aligned with the intent of state AODA resources. Reported benefits of reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and risk factors are strong and encouraging. Funding is achieving its purpose. The following recommendations are offered.

1. **The DPI should continue its effort to promote quality peer programs as part of a comprehensive ATODA approach to school health, with continued resources from the Wisconsin legislature.** Grant management policy and practice should support this recommendation by continuing to include funding of peer programs in comprehensive AODA program funding.

2. **The DPI should actively promote strong peer programs by disseminating the key characteristics of effective programs identified in the literature review.** Technical assistance resources should be developed to describe the characteristics in greater depth. This information should be widely disseminated to schools, CESAs, and community partners to assist them in improving the design and implementation of peer programs.

3. **The DPI should support technical assistance to adults and youth involved in training, delivering, and evaluating peer programs.** This can include CESA technical assistance conferences, workshops, share shops, grant management and training meetings, list serves, and networking sessions for peer program adults and youth to share strengths, solve problems, and improve programs.

The executive summary, the summary literature review, and full field report are available on DPI's website at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/sspw/youthtoyouth.html

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